

PART 704—INFORMATION DISCLOSURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 1975-1975(f); 5 U.S.C. 552.

§ 704.1 Material available pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552.

(a) *Purpose, scope, and definitions.* (1) This section contains the regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights implementing 5 U.S.C. 552. These regulations inform the public with respect to where and how records and information may be obtained from the Commission. Officers and employees of the Commission shall make Commission records available under 5 U.S.C. 552 only as prescribed in this section. Nothing contained in this section, however, shall be construed to prohibit officers or employees of the Commission from routinely furnishing information or records which are customarily furnished in the regular performance of their duties.

(2) For the purposes of these regulations the terms listed below are defined as indicated:

Commission means the United States Commission on Civil Rights;

Solicitor means the Solicitor of the United States Commission on Civil Rights or his/her designee;

FOIA Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552;

FOIA Request means a request in writing, for records pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552 which meets the requirements of 704.1(d) herein. These regulations do not apply to telephone or other oral communications and requests not complying with § 704.1(d)(1)(i);

Staff Director means the Staff Director of the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

(b) *General policy.* In order to foster the maximum participation of an informed public in the affairs of Government, the Commission will make the fullest possible disclosure of its identi-

fiable records and information consistent with such considerations as those provided in the exemptions of 5 U.S.C. 552, which are set forth in paragraph (f) of this section.

(c) *Material maintained on file pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2).* Material maintained on file pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2) shall be available for inspection during regular business hours at the offices of the Commission at 1121 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20425. Copies of such material shall be available upon written request, specifying the material desired, addressed to the Solicitor's Unit, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425, and upon the payment of fees, if any, determined in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section.

(1) *Current index.* Included in the material available pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2) shall be an index of:

(i) All other material maintained on file pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2); and

(ii) All material published by the Commission in the FEDERAL REGISTER and currently in effect.

(2) *Deletion of identifying details.* Wherever deletions from material maintained on file pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2) are required in order to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy, justification for the deletions shall be placed as a preamble to documents from which such deletions are made.

(d) *Materials available pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3)—(1) Request Procedures.*

(i) Each request for records pursuant to this subsection shall be in writing over the signature of the requester, addressed to the Solicitor's Unit, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425 and: (A) Shall clearly and prominently be identified as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act [if submitted by mail or otherwise submitted in an envelope or other cover, be clearly and prominently identified as such on the envelope or other cover—e.g., FOIA]; and (B) shall contain a sufficiently specific description of the record requested with respect to names, dates, and subject matter to permit such record to be identified and located; and (C) shall contain a statement that whatever costs involved pursuant to

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§ 704.1(e) will be paid, that such costs will be paid up to a specified amount, or that waiver or reduction of fees is requested pursuant to § 704.1(e).

(ii) If the information submitted pursuant to § 704.1(d)(1)(i)(B) is insufficient to enable identification and location of the records, the Solicitor shall as soon as possible notify the requester in writing indicating the additional information needed. Every reasonable effort shall be made to assist in the identification and location of the record sought. Time requirements under these regulations are tolled from the date notification under this subsection is sent to the requester until an answer in writing to such notification is received from requester.

(iii) A request for records which is not in writing or does not comply with § 704.1(d)(1)(i) is not a request under the Freedom of Information Act and the 10 day time limit for agency response under the Act will not be deemed applicable.

(iv) Except as otherwise provided herein, the Solicitor shall immediately notify the requester of noncompliance with § 704.1(d)(1)(i)(C) and § 704.1(e).

(2) *Agency determinations.* (i) Responses to all requests pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3) shall be made by the Solicitor in writing to the requester within 10 working days after receipt by the Solicitor of such request except as specifically exempted under § 704.1(d)(1)(ii), (iii) and (iv), and shall state: (A) Whether and to what extent the Commission will comply with the request; (B) the probable availability of the records or that the records may be furnished with deletions or that records will be denied as exempt pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (i) through (ix); (C) the estimated costs, determined in accordance with 704.1(e) herein, including waiver or reduction of fee as appropriate and any deposit or prepayment requirement; and (D) when records are to be provided, the time and place at which records or copies will be available determined in accordance with the terms of the request and with § 704.1(d)(3). Such response shall be termed a determination notice.

(ii) In the case of denial of requests in whole or part the determination notice shall state: (A) Specifically what

records are being denied; (B) the reasons for such denials; (C) the specific statutory exemption(s) upon which such denial is based; (D) the names and titles or positions of every person responsible for the denial of such request; and (E) the right of appeal to the Staff Director of the Commission and procedures for such appeal as provided under § 704.1(g).

(iii) Each request received by the Solicitor's Unit for records pursuant to these regulations shall be recorded immediately. The record of each request shall be kept current, stating the date and time the request is received, the name and address of the person making the request, any amendments to such request, the nature of the records requested, the action taken regarding the request, including waiver of fees, extensions of time pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B), and appeals. The date and subject of any letters pursuant to § 704.1(d)(1) or agency determinations pursuant to paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section, the date(s) any records are subsequently furnished, and the payment requested and received.

(3) *Time limitations.* (i) Time limitations for agency response to a request for records established by these regulations shall begin when the request is recorded pursuant to § 704.1(d)(2)(iii). A written request pursuant to FOIA but sent to an office of the Commission other than the Solicitor's Unit shall be date stamped, initialed and redirected immediately to the Solicitor's Unit. The required period for agency determination shall begin when it is received by the Solicitor's Unit in accordance with § 704.1(d)(2)(iii).

(ii) In unusual circumstances, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B), the Solicitor may, in the case of initial determinations under these regulations, extend the 10 working day time limit in which the agency is required to make its determination notification. Such extension shall be communicated in writing to the requesting party setting forth with particularity the reasons for such extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be transmitted. Such extensions may not exceed 10 working days for any request and may only be used to the extent

necessary to properly process a particular request. Such extension is permissible only where there is a demonstrated need: (A) To search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the Solicitor's Unit; (B) to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or (C) for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the same agency having substantial subject matter interest therein.

(e) *Fees*—(1) *Definitions*. The following definitions apply to the terms when used in this section:

(i) *Direct costs* means those expenditures which the Commission actually incurs in searching for and duplicating (and in the case of commercial requesters, reviewing) documents to respond to a request made under § 704.1(d) of this part. Direct costs include, for example, the salary of the employee(s) performing the work (the basic rate of pay for the employee(s) plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits) and the cost of operating duplicating machinery. Not included in direct costs are overhead expenses such as costs of space, and heating or lighting the facility in which the records are stored.

(ii) *Search* means all time spent looking for material that is responsive to a request, including page-by-page or line-by-line identification within documents. However, an entire document will be duplicated if this would prove to be a more efficient and less expensive method of complying with a request than a more detailed manner of searching. *Search* is distinguished from *review* of material in order to determine whether the material is exempt from disclosure.

(iii) *Duplication* means the process of making a copy of a document necessary to respond to a request for disclosure of records. Such copies can take the form of paper or machine readable documentation (e.g., magnetic tape or disk), among others.

(iv) *Review* means the process of examining documents located in response to an information request to determine whether any portion of any document is permitted to be withheld. It also includes processing any documents for disclosure, e.g., doing all that is necessary to prepare them for release. Review does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(v) *Commercial use request* means a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In deciding whether a requester properly belongs in this category, the Solicitor will determine the use to which a requester will put the documents requested. When the Solicitor has reasonable cause to doubt such intended use, or where such use is not clear from the request itself, the Solicitor will see additional clarification before assigning the request to a specific category.

(vi) *Educational institution* means a school, an institution of higher education, an institution of professional education or an institution of vocational education, which operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(vii) *Noncommercial scientific institution* means an institution that is not operated on a commercial basis and which is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(viii) *Representative of the news media* means any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term *news* means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. News media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of "news") who make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general

public. “Freelance” journalists may be regarded as working for a news organization if they can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that organization, even though not actually employed by it.

(2) *Costs to be included in fees.* The direct costs included in fees will vary according to the following categories of requests:

(i) *Commercial use requests.* Fees will include the Commission’s direct costs for searching for, reviewing, and duplicating the requested records.

(ii) *Educational and noncommercial scientific institution requests.* The Commission will provide documents to requesters in this category for the cost of duplication alone, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, requesters must show that the request is being made under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are sought in furtherance of scholarly (if the request is from an educational institution) or scientific (if the request is from a noncommercial scientific institution) research.

(iii) *Requests from representatives of the news media.* The Commission will provide documents to requesters in this category for the cost of duplication alone, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. To be eligible for inclusion in this category a requester must meet the criteria in paragraph (e)(1)(viii) of this section.

(iv) *All other requests.* The Commission will charge requesters who do not fit into any of the categories in paragraphs (e)(2)(i) through (iii) of this section fees which cover the direct costs of searching for and duplicating records that are responsive to the requests, except for the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages duplicated. However, requests from persons for records about themselves will continue to be treated under the fee provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and § 705.10 of this chapter.

(3) *Fee calculation.* Fees will be calculated as follows:

(i) *Manual search.* At the salary rate (basic pay plus 16 percent) of the employee(s) making the search.

(ii) *Computer search.* At the actual direct cost of providing the search, in-

cluding computer search time directly attributable to search for records responsive to the request, runs, and operator salary apportionable to the search.

(iii) *Review (commercial use requests only).* At the salary rate (basic pay plus 16 percent) of the employee(s) conducting the review. Only the review necessary at the initial administrative level to determine the applicability of any exemption, and not review at the administrative appeal level, will be included in the fee.

(iv) *Duplication.* At 20 cents per page for paper copy. For copies of records prepared by computer (such as tapes or printouts), the actual cost of production, including operator time, will be charged.

(v) *Additional services; certification.* Express mail and other additional services that may be arranged by the requester will be charged at actual cost. The fee for certification or authentication of copies shall be \$3.00 per document.

(vi) *Assessment of interest.* The Commission may begin assessing interest charges on the 31st day following the day the fee bill is sent. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and will accrue from the date of billing.

(vii) No fee shall be charged if the total billable cost calculated under paragraphs (e)(2) and (3) of this section is less than \$10.00.

(4) *Waiver or reduction of fees.* (i) Documents will be furnished without charge, or at a reduced charge, where disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(ii) Whenever a waiver or reduction of fees is granted, only one copy of the record will be furnished.

(iii) The decision of the Solicitor on any fee waiver or reduction request shall be final and unappealable.

(5) *Payment procedures*—(i) *Fee payment.* Payment of fees shall be made by cash (if delivered in person), check or money order payable to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

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(ii) *Notification of fees.* No work shall be done that will result in fees in excess of \$25.00 without written authorization from the requester. Where it is anticipated that fees will exceed \$25.00, and the requester has not indicated in advance a willingness to pay fees as high as are anticipated, the requester will be notified of the amount of the projected fees. The notification shall offer the requester an opportunity to confer with the Solicitor in an attempt to reformulate the request so as to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost. The administrative time limits prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6) will not begin until after the requester agrees in writing to accept the prospective charges.

(6) *Advance payment of fees.* When fees are projected to exceed \$250.00, the requester may be required to make an advance payment of all or part of the fee before the request is processed. If a requester has previously failed to pay a fee in a timely fashion (i.e. within 30 days of the billing date), the requester will be required to pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before a new or pending request is processed from that requester. The administrative time limits prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6) will not begin until after the requester has complied with this provision.

(7) *Other provisions—(i) Charges for unsuccessful search.* Charges may be assessed for time spent searching for requested records, even if the search fails to locate responsive records or the records are determined, after review, to be exempt from disclosure.

(ii) *Aggregating requests to avoid fees.* Multiple requests shall be aggregated when the Solicitor reasonably determines that a requester or group of requesters is attempting to break down a request into a series of requests to evade fees.

(iii) *Debt Collection Act.* The Debt Collection Act, including disclosure to consumer reporting agencies and use of collection agencies, will be used to encourage payment where appropriate.

(f) *Exemptions (5 U.S.C. 552(b))—*

(1) *General.* The Commission may exempt from disclosure matters that are:

(i)(A) Specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order.

(ii) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;

(iii) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute;

(iv) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;

(v) Interagency or intra-agency memoranda or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;

(vi) Personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(vii) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information:

(A) Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings,

(B) Could deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication,

(C) Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy,

(D) Could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis,

(E) Could disclose techniques and procedures for all enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or could disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or

(F) Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;

(viii) Contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the

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regulation or supervision of financial institutions; and

(ix) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

(2) Investigatory records or information. (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(7)). (i) Among the documents exempt from disclosure pursuant to § 704.1(f)(1)(vii) shall be records or information reflecting investigations which either are conducted for the purpose of determining whether a violation(s) of legal right has taken place, or have disclosed that a violation(s) of legal right has taken place, but only to the extent that production of such records or information would fall within the classifications established in paragraphs (f)(1)(vii)(B) through (F) of this section.

(ii) Among the documents exempt from disclosure under paragraphs (f)(1)(vii)(D) and (f)(2)(i) of this section concerning confidential sources shall be documents which disclose the fact or the substance of a communication made to the Commission in confidence relating to an allegation or support of an allegation of wrongdoing by certain persons. It is sufficient under this subsection to indicate the confidentiality of the source if the substance of the communication or the circumstances of the communication indicate that investigative effectiveness could reasonably be expected to be inhibited by disclosure.

(iii) Whenever a request is made which involves access to records described in paragraph (f)(1)(vii)(A) of this section and the investigation or proceeding involves a possible violation of criminal law; and there is reason to believe that the subject of the investigation or proceeding is not aware of its pendency, and disclosure of the existence of the records could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, the Commission may, during only such time as that circumstance continues, treat the records as not subject to the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552 and this section.

(3) Any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be provided to any person requesting such record after deletion of the portions which are exempt under this subsection.

(g) *Administrative appeals.* (1) These procedures apply whenever a requester is denied records under § 704.1(d)(2)(i).

(2) Parties may appeal § 704.1(d)(2)(i) decisions within 90 days of the date of such decision by filing a written request for review addressed to the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425, by certified mail, including a copy of the written denial, and may include a statement of the circumstances, reasons or arguments advanced in support of disclosure. Review will be made by the Staff Director on the basis of the written record.

(3) The decision on review of any appeal filed under this subsection shall be in writing over the signature of the Staff Director, will be promptly communicated to the person requesting review, and will constitute the final action of the Commission.

(4) Determinations of appeals filed under this subsection shall be made within 20 working days after the receipt of such appeal. If, on appeal, denial of records is in whole or part upheld, the Staff Director shall notify the persons making such request of the provisions for judicial review of that determination under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4).

(5) An extension of time may be granted under this subsection pursuant to criteria established in § 704.1(d)(3)(ii) (A) to (C), except that such extension together with any extension which may have been granted pursuant to § 704.1(d)(3)(ii) may not exceed a total of 10 working days.

[40 FR 22833, May 27, 1975, as amended at 44 FR 75152, Dec. 19, 1979; 55 FR 9884, 9886, Mar. 16, 1990]

§ 704.2 Complaints.

Any person may bring to the attention of the Commission a grievance which he believes falls within the jurisdiction of the Commission, as set forth in section 104 of the Act. This shall be done by submitting a complaint in writing to the Office of Federal Civil Rights Evaluation, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425. Allegations falling under section 104(a) (1) and (5) of the Act (discrimination or fraud in voting) must be under oath or affirmation. All complaints should set forth the pertinent facts upon which

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the complaint is based, including but not limited to specification of (a) names and titles of officials or other persons involved in acts forming the basis for the complaint; (b) accurate designations of place locations involved; (c) dates of events described in the complaint.

[34 FR 7577, May 10, 1969, as amended at 44 FR 75152, Dec. 19, 1979]

§ 704.3 Other requests and communications.

Requests for information should be addressed to Press and Communications Division and requests for Commission literature should be directed to Publications Management Division, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425. Communications with respect to Commission proceedings should be made pursuant to § 702.17 of this chapter. All other communications should be directed to Office of Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20425.

[44 FR 75152, Dec. 19, 1979]

§ 704.4 Restrictions on disclosure of information.

(a) By the provisions of section 102(g) of the Act, no evidence or testimony or summary of evidence or testimony taken in executive session may be released or used in public sessions without the consent of the Commission, and any person who releases or uses in public without the consent of the Commission such evidence or testimony taken in executive session shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than 1 year.

(b) Unless a matter of public record, all information or documents obtained or prepared by any Member, officer, or employee of the Commission, including members of State Advisory Committees, in the course of his official duties, or by virtue of his official status, shall not be disclosed or used by such person for any purpose except in the performance of his official duties.

(c) Any Member, officer, or employee of the Commission including members of State Advisory Committees, who is served with a subpoena, order, or other demand requiring the disclosure of such information or the production of

such documents shall appear in response to such subpoena, order, or other demand and, unless otherwise directed by the Commission, shall respectfully decline to disclose the information or produce the documents called for, basing his refusal upon this section. Any such person who is served with such a subpoena, order, or other demand shall promptly advise the Commission of the service of such subpoena, order, or other demand, the nature of the information or documents sought, and any circumstances which may bear upon the desirability of making available such information or documents.

[32 FR 9684, July 4, 1967]

PART 705—MATERIALS AVAILABLE PURSUANT TO 5 U.S.C. 552a

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AUTHORITY: Secs. 101–106, 71 Stat. 634–636 as amended (42 U.S.C. 1975–1975c); 5 U.S.C. 552a.

SOURCE: 40 FR 45727, Oct. 2, 1975, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 44 FR 75152, Dec. 19, 1979.

§ 705.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) The purpose of this part is to set forth rules to inform the public regarding information maintained by the Commission on Civil Rights about identifiable individuals and to inform those individuals how they may gain